



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

countrymen enjoy. But this is a matter upon which our national government, and not any one state, should act.

While I do not wish to appear in any way officious, I feel that if the people of California would memorialize Congress or the State Department on the subject, giving them the true facts as they are, they should feel that their interests would be carefully studied and everything done to protect them legitimately and properly. It is the precipitate action of some people on the Pacific Coast which is so unwise, and should not be allowed, for the

reason that it might be serious in its consequences, involving the entire nation. May we, as an American people, never lower ourselves to commit unjust acts, through passion of the moment, which we may later sincerely regret! Our reputation as a fair people and our interests as a nation of business and industry demand that this problem be solved from a national standpoint, and from the interests of all concerned and the nation as a whole.

This is not a question of pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese, but of common sense and fair dealing.

The Japanese Issue in California

By COL. JOHN P. IRISH¹

Member of the State Development Board, Oakland, California

RETROSPECTION will serve to illuminate current history. When the anti-Chinese agitation convulsed California a Congressional committee came here to investigate. In behalf of the municipality of San Francisco, this presentation of the case was made: "The Chinese are inferior to any race God ever made. They have got the perfection of the crimes of 4,000 years. The Chinese have no souls to save, and if they have they are not worth saving." The California Senate in its memorial to Congress said: "Impregnable to all the influences of Anglo-Saxon life they remain the same stolid Asiatics that have floated on the rivers and slaved

in the fields of China for thirty centuries of time." The Attorney-General of California testified: "The Chinese are inferior to the Negro and to the Indian."

The expulsion of the Chinese was demanded because of their vices. Following this we violated our treaty with China and expelled them by thousands. This created an economic vacuum that drew in the Japanese. Cultivated land amounting to 568,943 acres lapsed back to nature and ceased production for lack of farm labor. The Japanese came in slowly and abandoned fields were made productive by their labor. They proved to be cleanly, honest, law-abiding and very industrious. Not until after the Japanese-Russian war was there any criticism of them. Then the politicians and the press began an anti-Japanese agitation that has continued in intensity.

In contrast now with great abuse of the Japanese was constant expression

¹ President of Directory of the State Industrial Home for the Adult Blind for 30 years; Director for 35 years of the State Development Board, an organization devoted to the material development of the State; President of the California Delta Association, representing 250,000 acres of marsh land reclaimed by the skill and industry of the Japanese; practical farmer in California for 30 years.—The Editor.

of favor for the Chinese. Now why this change? The people by a friendlier contact with the Chinese had abated the earlier false judgment. They had repented the murder and robbery of which Chinese had been the victims, and were in the temper of atonement.

As the Chinese had been condemned for their imputed vices, so the Japanese are condemned for their virtues, for their sobriety, their industry, their intelligence and skill, for their respect for law and for their honesty. Dr. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, President emeritus of the State University of California, in a speech against them said: "Their good taste, persistent industry, their excellent qualities and their virtues render their presence amongst us a pitiful danger."

When the Chinese were under the lash of persecution the *Sacramento Bee* was in the front rank of their enemies. It rejoiced at every crime committed against them. Saul never pursued the Christians with a bloodier purpose. But when the persecution of the Japanese began the *Sacramento Bee* demanded that they be driven out and the Chinese admitted again by repeal of the Exclusion Act.

It is of especial interest that every attack on the Japanese is based upon their desirable qualities, and no claim of their inferiority is made. Rather their enemies profess dread of their superiority.

California increased in population 44 per cent in the last ten years, while the increase for the rest of the country was only 14 per cent. Of our population the Japanese are only 2.2 per cent, and that hardly perceptible number constitutes "the problem" about which public opinion here has been poisoned by falsehoods, just as happened in the case of the Chinese. The anti-Japanese initiative adopted on November 2

was supported by the entire press of the state and by four millionaire politicians; only one side got publicity, the opposition none, and yet 222 thousand votes were cast against it. Those voters knew the Japanese by contact, by acquaintance and by experience, and were the sound part of the public opinion of California. It will be readily understood that in a population of more than three and a quarter millions only a fraction can have had contact with our 2.2 per cent of Japanese. The anti-Japanese vote was cast by many of that percentage, who probably knew little if anything personally about the Japanese and were ready to accept as true every slander of them. In this will be seen the operation of the same causes that have modified the former hatred of the Chinese and displaced it by a cordial friendship.

The anti-Japanese agitators here are endeavoring to spread their propaganda through our eastern states, by taking advantage of the lack of personal knowledge by contact with the Japanese. To this end certain story writers for publications like the *Saturday Evening Post* are pouring poison into eastern public opinion by stories that are so false as to be ridiculous. The moving picture is also called into this disreputable service.

The building up of antagonism to Japan and hatred of the Japanese domiciled here should be viewed with solicitude. Readers of newspapers are on guard against editorial expression of opinion, but they are off guard when they read the news columns. This has led to the vicious and persistent sophistication of the news. It is being used to poison public opinion in regard to Japan. A leading metropolitan newspaper, owned by a United States Senator, has obviously organized a system for this purpose. Every day it publishes news items, pretended

to be wired, sometimes from far Bombay, Korea, Mongolia and Manchuria, always attacking Japan. Evidence of design in this evil doing is found in the republication of all these news items in a metropolitan daily in San Francisco, and in other papers which naturally would not do this except by an arrangement.

So proceeds this conspiracy against the peace of nations. All of this bad work is dangerously trifling with the friendship of nations and the peace of the world. We speak of it as "the Japanese problem." Is it not rather an American problem? Does it not involve the education of public opinion in this country to demand the truth from the American press, and to drive the envenomed agitator against other nations and their people from the public platform? Does not the solution of the problem require that we see our own danger from ourselves? Is it not worth while to ask ourselves how long society can last with its public opinion based upon prejudice and poisoned by persistent falsehood? With this American problem solved there will be no Japanese problem. The truth will have disposed of it.

What influenced the two hundred and twenty-two thousand California voters to vote against the anti-Japanese initiative? The truth was the only influence. It was what they had seen, their experience and contact with the few Japanese who are here. They had seen the Japanese convert barren land like that at Florin and Livingston, into productive and profitable fields, orchards and vineyards, by the persistence and intelligence of their industry. They had seen the hard pan

and goose lands in the Sacramento valley, gray and black with our two destructive alkalis, lie, cursed with barrenness like the fig tree of Bethany, and not worth paying taxes on, until Ikuta, the Japanese, decided that those lands would raise rice. After years of persistent toil, enduring heart-breaking losses and disappointments, he conquered that rebellious soil and raised the first commercial crop of rice in California. Due to the work of that great Japanese pioneer this state now has a rice crop worth sixty million dollars a year, and the land that he found worthless now sells for two hundred dollars per acre.

Or these voters had seen the repulsive "hog wallow" lands in the thermal belt of the west slope of the Sierra, avoided by white men, so unproductive and forbidding that they defaced the scenery, reclaimed by the genius and toil of the Japanese Sakamoto, and now transformed into beautiful vineyards and citrus orchards from Seville to Lemon Cove. They had seen that 70 per cent of the total seventy-four thousand acres owned by Japanese, was these lands that disfigured the state until they had been reclaimed by Japanese genius and industry. They had met the Japanese industrially and socially. They knew their personal cleanliness, their scrupulous neatness of dress, their uniform cheerfulness, their politeness and good manners, their kindness and their gratitude for just and considerate treatment, their sobriety and respect for law, and seeing and knowing all this no falsehood, however subtle, could swerve them from obedience to the truth.